

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 036308 TOSEC 020074  
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY ARA/CCA:CGLEESTEEN:MJT  
APPROVED BY ARA/TATODMAN  
ARA - MR. LUERS  
S/S -AWOTTO  
AWOTTO

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TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 036308 TOSEC 020074

NODIS  
FOR THE SECRETARY FROM TODMAN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TA : PFOR, CU

SUBJECT: MY DEBRIEFING OF BINGHAM ON HIS HAVANA TRIP

1. I MET WITH REPRESENTATIVE BINGHAM AT LENGTH ON  
FEBRUARY 16 TO DEBRIEF HIM ON TWO MEETINGS HE HAD WITH  
CASTRO TOTALLING 8 HOURS AS WELL AS WITH RODRIGUEZ AND  
OTHER SENIOR CUBAN OFFICIALS.

2. BINGHAM'S STRONGEST IMPRESSION, AND HE WILL PASS THIS  
TO THE PRESIDENT DURING AN APPOINTMENT HE HAS ON  
FEBRUARY 22, IS THAT CASTRO IS PERSONALLY EAGER TO NORMALIZE  
RELATIONS WITH US, BUT BINGHAM IS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THIS  
WOULD BE FULLY SUPPORTED BY DOCTRINAIRE AND MILITANT  
ELEMENTS OF HIS REGIME. BINGHAM THINKS NOW IS A UNIQUELY  
FAVORABLE TIME TO MOVE BECAUSE CASTRO OF COURSE IS VERY  
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MUCH ON TOP. BINGHAM ALSO BELIEVES CONGRESSIONAL REACTION  
WOULD BE AS FAVORABLE AS AT ANY TIME, WITH 15-30 MEMBERS  
STRONGLY OPPOSED, 15-30 MEMBERS WHO WOULD CARRY THE BALL  
FOR THE ADMINISTRATION, AND THE STRONG DEMOCRATIC  
MAJORITIES IN BOTH HOUSES DISPOSED TO FOLLOW STRONG  
PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP.

3. CASTRO WAS ADAMANT THAT THE EMBARGO HAD TO BE LIFTED BEFORE THE 1973 HIJACKING AGREEMENT CAN BE REINSTATED OR BEFORE OFFICIAL NEGOTIATIONS CAN BEGIN. THIS AGREEMENT CAN ONLY BE DISCUSSED IN A WIDER FRAMEWORK; OTHERWISE IT WOULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD BY CUBAN PUBLIC OPINION. A NEW HIJACKING AGREEMENT, ONCE THE EMBARGO IS LIFTED, COULD EITHER PRECEED OR FOLLOW RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

4. IN THE MEANTIME CASTRO WISHES TO DISCUSS FISHERIES ISSUES DIRECTLY WITH US, TO HAVE SPORTS AND CULTURAL EXCHANGES, AND TO COOPERATE WITH US AND PERHAPS JAMAICA IN COMBATTING A SUGAR CANE BLIGHT WHICH RECENTLY APPEARED IN JAMAICA AND COULD SPREAD TO CUBA AND OUR SOUTHERN STATES. CASTRO WOULD NOT RULE OUT SECRET DISCUSSIONS WITH US ON THE BROADER ISSUES.

5. CUBANS SAID THEY WOULD WELCOME LIFTING OF RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL BY AMERICAN CITIZENS TO CUBA. BUT THEY ARE INCAPABLE OF HANDLING LARGE NUMBERS OF TOURISTS AND ALREADY HAVE MORE CANADIANS THAN THEY CAN HANDLE.

6. ON ANGOLA, CASTRO STRESSED CUBA'S AFRICAN TIES AND WAS AMBIVALENT ABOUT CUBAN FUTURE INVOLVEMENT IN OTHER SOUTH AFRICAN COUNTRIES. CUBA WOULD BE GUIDED BY ITS PRINCIPLES BUT ALSO WAS AWARE THE NEGATIVE EFFECT THIS WOULD HAVE ON US-CUBAN RELATIONS. HE DESCRIBED CUBA AS BEING BETWEEN US AND AFRICAN PRESSURES. CUBAN TROOPS IN ANGOLA HAD BEEN CUT IN HALF (BUT HE DID CONFIDENTIAL

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NOT GIVE THE PEAK FIGURE EXCEPT TO SAY IT WAS HIGHER THAN KISSINGER'S HIGHEST PUBLIC ESTIMATES). CUBA IS ROTATING ITS TROOPS, BUT THERE IS NET REDUCTION. THEY WILL STAY IN ANGOLA AS LONG AS NEEDED BECAUSE OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN THREAT. CUBA HAS 4,000 CIVILIAN TECHNICIANS IN ANGOLA AND WILL SEND MORE.

7. RODRIQUEZ SAID CUBA HAD 9 AMERICAN CIA AGENTS IN PRISON. THEY MIGHT BE RELEASED, NOT AS A HUMANITARIAN GESTURE, BUT AS A GOODWILL GESTURE IN THE PROCESS OF LARGER DISCUSSIONS.

8. AS FOR CUBAN POLITICAL PRISONERS THIS WAS STRICTLY A CUBAN AFFAIR. CASTRO HARSHLY SAID HUBER MATOS WOULD REMAIN INCARCERATED UNTIL THE LAST DAY OF HIS TERM.

9. ON GUANTANAMO CASTRO MERELY COMMENTED THAT THE US DOES NOT MAINTAIN BASES BY FORCE ANYWHERE ELSE BUT THERE. HARTMAN

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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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